

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-13

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-25 ISO-00 SAJ-01 SAB-01 OMB-01 AID-20

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10

PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20 USIA-15 SAM-01 IO-14

EA-11 EB-11 DRC-01 /187 W

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FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6447

INFO USINT ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

USMISSION GENEVA

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

USINT BAGHDAD

USINT CAIRO

USINT DAMASCUS

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 1764

GENEVA FOR MEPC DEL

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PIN PFOR XF

SUBJECT: FEDAYEEN ATTITUDES RE TERRORISM AND PEACEFUL ME
SETTLEMENT

REF: BEIRUT 1636

SUMMARY: INTER-FEDAYEEN CONTROVERSY OVER PFLP'S LATEST
TERRORIST OPERATIONS, COMBINED WITH GROWING IMPATIENCE
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ON PART OF FEDAYEEN "REJECTIONIST" DIE-HARDS WITH GOALS

BEING PURSUED BY PLO "MODERATE" LEADERS IN CONNECTION WITH ME SETTLEMENT EFFORT, SEEMS TO BE BRINGING COMMANDO MOVEMENT CLOSER TO SHOWDOWN OVER WHOSE POLICIES WILL PREVAIL. END SUMMARY.

1. LATEST TERRORIST OPERATIONS IN SINGAPORE AND KUWAIT HAVE GIVEN RISE TO CONSIDERABLE SPECULATION HERE THAT PLO LEADERSHIP MAY EXPEL OR SUSPEND PFLP FROM FEDAYEEN MOVEMENT FOR DEFYING PLO "UNITY" BY COMMITTING CONTINUED ACTS OF UNILATERAL MAYHEM (FBIS M090948). RESPONDING TO EARLIER PLO CRITICISM OF PFLP BEHAVIOR (REFTEL), PFLP LAST WEEKEND VOICED PUBLIC "ASTONISHMENT" AT PLO ATTITUDE AND DERIDED PLO LEADERSHIP FOR ITS "INCAPACITY TO ASSURE LIBERTY OF FEDAYEEN IN SINGAPORE AND KUWAIT". IT ALSO DENIED PLO ACCUSATION THAT PFLP HAD "DEVIATED" FROM FEDAYEEN GOALS, CHARGING THAT REAL DEVIATORS "ARE CERTAIN PLO LEADERS WHO KEEP SILENT ABOUT CAPITULATIONIST SOLUTIONS AND EFFORTS BY REACTIONARY FORCES LED BY SAUDI ARABIA AND DEFEATIST REGIMES LED BY SADAT TO LIQUIDATE OUR CAUSE". PLO LEADERSHIP COUNTERATTACKED ON FEB 10 WITH ANTI-PFLP DIATRIBE IN PLO (Wafa) DAILY BULLETIN, ACCUSING HABASH AND CO. OF "RESORTING TO POLEMICS IN THIS DELICATE PERIOD" AND OF "IMPERILING PALESTINIAN UNITY AND PREJUDICING OUR CAUSE" BY CONTINUED HIJACKINGS AND CRITICISMS OF PLO LEADERSHIP. PFLP BEHAVIOR, WARNED Wafa, IS REMINISCENT OF SPIRIT WHICH PERMEATED FEDAYEEN MOVEMENT ON EVE OF SEPTEMBER 1970 "MASSACRES" IN JORDAN. UNREPENTANT PFLP SPOKESMAN SUBSEQUENTLY FANNED CONTROVERSY BY POOH-POOHING PLO'S ABILITY TO PUNISH PFLP AND CHARGING SUCH EFFORTS WERE REALLY AIMED AT FORCING PFLP TO CHANGE ITS "REJECTIONIST" POLICIES RE ME PEACE SETTLEMENT.

2. AMID THESE BITTER EXCHANGES, WE UNDERSTAND THAT PLO EX COMM, IN SERIES OF MEETINGS SINCE FEB 8, HAS TAKEN NO ACTION ON PROPOSALS TO EXPEL, OR AT LEAST SUSPEND, PFLP FROM MEMBERSHIP IN PLO. INACTION OSTENSIBLY DUE TO ABSENCE OF AHMED YAMANI, PFLP REP ON PLO/EC, IN KUWAIT, WHERE HE WAS ASSISTING IN NEGOTIATIONS FOR RELEASE OF FIVE TERRORISTS HOLED UP IN JAPANESE EMBASSY AND FOR THEIR REMOVAL, ALONG WITH FOUR SINGAPORE

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TERRORISTS, TO ADEN. REAL REASON, HOWEVER, PROBABLY IS INABILITY OF FATAH AND OTHER "MODERATE" ELEMENTS IN PLO/EC TO MUSTER ENOUGH SUPPORT FOR SUCH DECISIVE ACTION.

3. Wafa BULLETIN OF FEB 10 ALSO ANNOUNCED THAT RECENT PLO/EC MEETINGS RESULTED IN DECISION TO CONVENE PALESTINE NATIONAL COUNCIL'S CENTRAL COMMITTEE (COMPOSED OF 9

PLO/EC MEMBERS AND 11 PNC MEMBERS SUPPOSEDLY REPRESENTING ALL FACTIONS OF THAT BODY), WHICH WILL MEET IN DAMASCUS "IN FEW DAYS" TO DEVISE PLAN OF ACTION (INITIALLY DRAFTED BY SA'IQA'S ZOHAYR MUHSEN) THAT WOULD ENABLE FEDAYEEN MOVEMENT CONFRONT "EXPECTED AREA DEVELOPMENTS"--E.G., POSSIBILITY OF SYRIAN-ISRAELI AND JORDANIAN-ISRAELI DISENGAGEMENT AGREEMENTS AND FURTHER EFFORTS BY GREAT POWERS TOWARD OVERALL ME PEACE SETTLEMENT. MAIN THRUST OF ACTION PROGRAM, WHICH--ACCORDING TO WAF--HAS ALREADY BEEN "CRYSTALLIZED" IN PLO/EC, WILL BE TO CONCENTRATE FEDAYEEN POLITICAL EFFORTS ON ESTABLISHING "NATIONAL AUTHORITY" IN WEST BANK/GAZA TO OBSTRUCT RETURN OF THOSE TERRITORIES TO JORDANIAN CONTROL AND TO SERVE AS FOUNDATION FOR EVENTUAL INDEPENDENT PALESTINIAN STATE. DISCUSSION TOPICS REPORTEDLY WILL ALSO INCLUDE FEDAYEEN PARTICIPATION AT GENEVA CONFERENCE AND TIMING OF NEXT SEASON OF PNC (NOW REPORTEDLY POSTPONED FOR UMPTEENTH TIME). NO MENTION MADE OF ESTABLISHMENT OF PALESTINIAN GOVT-IN-EXILE, BUT WE ARE TOLD THAT THIS QUESTION, AS WELL AS REVIEW OF PFLP'S STATUS IN PLO, MAY ALSO ARISE.

4. COMMENT: ABOVE TALK ABOUT PFLP EXPULSION OR SUSPENSION FROM PLO MAY ONLY BE CALCULATED PRIMARILY FOR KUWAITI AND SAUDI CONSUMPTION. WHILE THERE UNDOUBTEDLY EXISTS CONSIDERABLE SUPPORT FOR THIS IDEA AMONG FATAH LEADERSHIP (SINCE IT WOULD CONVENIENTLY REMOVE PFLP AS OBSTACLE TO THEIR EFFORTS TO FORGE POSITIVE COMMON POSITION RE ME SETTLEMENT AND GENEVA CONFERENCE WITHIN PLO), WE DOUBT WHETHER IT CAN BE SOLD IN ANY FEDAYEEN CONCLAVE MAJORITY OF THOSE MEMBERSHIP IS NOT "STACKED" BY 'ARAFAT. THIS MAY IN FACT BE WHAT HE HAS IN MIND IN CONVOKING PNC CENTRAL COMMITTEE. CONSEQUENCES OF PFLP EXPULSION, HOWEVER--AS WELL AS REPERCUSSIONS OF ANY

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CENTRAL COMMITTEE ENDORSEMENT OF "POSITIVE" FEDAYEEN STAND RE PALESTINIAN STATE, GENEVA CONFERENCE AND SETTLEMENT EFFORT--COULD TOUCH OFF BITTER INTER-FEDAYEEN WAR THAT WOULD TEAR MOVEMENT APART. SINCE 'ARAFAT AND CO. ALREADY PRIME TARGETS OF WRATH ON PART OF PFLP AND OTHER "REJECTIONISTS" WHO VIEW (CORRECTLY) THEIR ADVOCACY OF "NATIONAL AUTHORITY" CONCEPT AS TROJAN HORSE DESIGNED TO FACILITATE PLO ROLE IN SETTLEMENT PROCESS, THEY AND OTHER PLO "MODERATES" (E.G., SA' IQA AND PFLP) WILL PROBABLY BE VERY CAREFUL TO AVOID OPEN BREAK WITHIN FEDAYEEN MOVEMENT FOR TIME BEING. SOONER OR LATER, HOWEVER, GIVEN FUTURE PROGRESS IN SETTLEMENT EFFORT AND WHATEVER POSITIVE "ASSURANCES" 'ARAFAT AND CO. CAN RECEIVE FROM EXTERNAL ARAB SOURCES, SHOWDOWN BETWEEN PLO "MODERATES" AND "REJECTIONISTS" SEEMS

ALMOST INEVITABLE.
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